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Full Name of Author — Nom complet de l'auteur

JIAN KANG

Date of Birth — Date de naissance
March 13, 1957

Country of Birth — Lieu de naissance
China

Permanent Address — Résidence fixe
24 Xuefu Rd
Harbin, Heilongjiang
China

Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse

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Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse
Bernard Linsky

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by

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(SIGNED) Kang Jian .....

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

24 Xuefu Road

Harbin, Heilongjiang

China

DATED August 1 1985

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....Bernard Linsky..

Supervisor

.....

.....

.....

Date... August...6th...1985...

Abstract

Davidson substitutes for questions about identities questions about sentences about identities and claims that what he considers about events is a problem of individuation. Davidson's formulation of the identity problem about events needs improvement. We should clearly distinguish the problem of individuation from the problem of differentiation even though we may have one single solution to both of them. I show that a general account of the problem of differentiation does not necessarily presuppose a specific criterion of individuation, and that we cannot determine whether different linguistic expressions are of one and the same event simply by looking at the semantic features of the expressions. The contextual use of a sentence may play a referential role and this is prerequisite to the differentiation of events under different descriptions. I reformulate Davidson's theory of events and speculate on a possible criterion of differentiation of events with the intention of supporting my reformulation.

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I. Preliminaries

It is not rare that philosophers use one expression to mean many different things, and sometimes they do not fully realize that they have been doing so. This may be one of the reasons why there are many fruitless debates and why many problems resist any positive solutions. Event-talk might be an example of this sort. When people talk about the identity of events, some try to offer a metaphysical explanation of what is supposed to be an individual event, some try to propose a practical criterion for telling individual events apart and some are busy arguing about how we can determine when what appear to us as two events are actually one. Are these people really considering one and the same problem? Can we legitimately isolate one from another? In contemporary Western philosophy, many philosophers believe that we can and we should, if we expect to have a correct understanding of identity problems and have any plausible solutions to them.

Intuitively, it seems possible to have a single solution to all the questions asked in the last paragraph. But from this we cannot conclude that those questions are one and the same, and that we have to answer them all at once. For instance, we may attempt to answer the question "What is *an* individual event?" by saying that it is a distinct and indivisible happening at a time in the world, without answering the second and the third questions. Or, we may say, as many philosophers suggest, that if entity *a* and

entity *b* share exactly the same set of properties, then we have one individual rather than two, without at the same time answering the question "How can we know whether *a* and *b* have all properties in common?" However, as Jaegwon Kim clearly points out, "To be told that event *a* and event *b* are the same event if and only if *a* and *b* share all properties in common gives us no real enlightenment, it gives us a definition, no doubt a valid one, but not a practically usable *criterion*, of the identity of events."[1]

Kim is clearly right, and we should inquire into the definitions and criteria which give us real enlightenment. Let us look at an example, which suggests one particular way in which we can talk about the identity problem significantly. John, after work, goes back home and asks his wife, "What did you do this afternoon?" The wife replies, "I cleaned the house."[2] A moment later, John asks his daughter, "What did your mother do this afternoon?" The daughter answers, "She vacuumed the carpet". Now John wonders whether his wife and his daughter describe exactly one and the same thing. The reason why such a problem arises is that what the wife describes appears to John as a different thing from what the daughter describes. John says to himself, "Now, I have a problem of telling how many things my wife did, and this, presumably, is the problem of differentiating events under different descriptions. If my wife did only one thing

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[1] See *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 3, p. 231.
[2] The sentence "I cleaned the house" may be used to designate an achievement. But in this situation, the wife means to report the action she performed.

this afternoon, that is, vacuuming the carpet, then the two descriptions I have are of one and the same thing. But if she ... ".

John is a sophisticated and thoughtful person. In this case, he speculates not on the problem of what is supposed to be *an* individual, but rather on the problem of how to tell what we have is actually one and the same entity. John does not seem to have any problem to recognize vacuuming the carpet and cleaning the house as individuals separately. John's problem is more epistemological than metaphysical; for apparently John is not considering the fuzzy problem of when an entity is identical with itself. But, unfortunately, John is not a philosopher. He may solve his own practical problems when he comes across them. But when asked "What would be a general criterion of telling whether two descriptions are of the same event?", he is baffled. And when John is asked to tell whether his flipping the switch is identical with his turning on the light, he seems desperately helpless and can only give an apparently arbitrary answer if pushed hard. John needs some help. Fortunately, many contemporary philosophers have been working long and hard on this sort of problem trying to get some enlightenment, even though some of them have not been fully aware of the relationship between different identity problems, so to speak.

In contemporary Western philosophy, Donald Davidson is one of the distinguished philosophers who has made a serious

effort to offer a criterion of individuation of events. As a matter of fact, Davidson's criterion is based on a carefully articulated theory of events. Below is a somewhat simplified summary of what Davidson has said about events.

(1) Sentences like 'Caesar died' do not refer to events, but singular terms like 'Caesar's death' do. Davidson believes that sentences assert the existence of things of a certain sort; therefore, sentences cannot be interpreted as referring or describing particulars. He says that events, if such there are, correspond to singular terms like 'the death of Caesar', and are quantified over in sentences such as 'Caesar died'.[3]

(2) Events are not facts. Facts are supposed to be what sentences correspond to.[4]

(3) We need the category of event in order to have an acceptable analysis of many typical sentences. Davidson writes, "... there are singular terms that apparently name events: 'Sally's third birthday party', 'the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 1906', 'my eating breakfast this morning', 'the first performance of *Lulu* in Chicago'."[5] Significantly, " ... there is a lot of language we can make systematic sense of if we suppose events exist, and we know no promising alternative. The presumption lies with events." Once we have events to talk about, we can say as much or as

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[3] See J. Margolis, *Fact and Existence*, p. 82.
[4] Ibid. Davidson does not talk much about facts in his event talk. What is important to us here is that Davidson does not believe events are facts.
[5] See Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, p. 164.

little as we please about them.[6] "In short, I propose to legitimize our intuition that events are true particulars by recognizing explicit reference to them, or quantification over them, in much of our ordinary talk. Take as an example, 'Sebastian strolled': this may be construed along lines suggested by 'Sebastian took a stroll.' 'There is an *x* such that *x* is a stroll and Sebastian took *x* is more ornate than necessary, since there is nothing an agent can do with a stroll except take it, thus we may capture all there is with 'There is an *x* such that Sebastian strolled *x*.'"[7]

(4) We may well treat events as objects and employ sentences to describe them; and we may have more than one description of one event. Davidson points out, "... for most our interest in identity sentences about events depends upon the assumption that the singular terms that appear in them refer to entities that are needed for the analysis of more ordinary sentences." If we analyse 'Sebastian took a stroll' as 'There is an *x* such that Sebastian strolled *x*', "... we provide each verb of action or change with an event-place; we may say of such verbs that they take an *event-object*." And, " ... it is hard to imagine a satisfactory theory of action if we cannot talk literally of the same action under different descriptions."[8]

(5) The problem of identity of events is the problem of determining under what conditions the sentence 'a = b' is

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[6] See *Fact and Existence*, p. 84.
[7] See Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, pp. 166--167.
[8] Ibid. pp. 164--167.

true, where 'a' and 'b' are singular event terms. Davidson claims that this is a very significant move in making sense of asking identity questions.

> There is a familiar embarrassment in asking identity questions of this sort that comes out clearly if we rephrase the question slightly: when are two events identical? Or, when is one event identical with another? It seems only one answer is possible: no *two* events are identical, no event is ever identical with *another*. It is hopeless to try to improve matters by asking instead, when is an event identical with itself? For again, only one answer is possible: always.
>
> The difficulty obviously has nothing special to do with events, it arises in relation to all identity questions. The only move I know for circumventing this conundrum is to substitute for questions about identities questions about sentences about identities. Then instead of asking when events are identical, we may ask when sentences of the form '*a* = *b*' are true, where we suppose '*a*' and '*b*' supplanted by singular terms referring to events.'

(6) Time and space are insufficient for individuating events; the correct criterion is whether events have exactly the same causes and effects. Davidson says, "... Events have a unique position in the framework of causal relations between events in somewhat the way objects have a unique position in the spatial framework of objects." The criterion is simply this: where *x* and *y* are events,

($x = y$ if and only if $((z)(z$ caused $x \leftrightarrow z$ caused $y)$

' Ibid. p. 163.

and $(z)(x \text{ caused } z \leftrightarrow y \text{ caused } z))$.'[10]

These six main points of Davidson's theory of events are intimately related and some of them are much more discussed by philosophers than others. For instance, an extensive literature on Davidson's causal criterion can be found and seems to have already settled the question of whether Davidson's criterion is well formulated and usable. In my present paper, I will pay much more attention to Davidson's arguments related to the first five points than to the discussion of Davidson's criterion itself. In many discussions of Davidson's theory of events, it seems that the first five points have barely been touched upon except some metaphysical consideration on the need for an event ontology. An attempt to look at these aspects of Davidson's theory is appealing and looks rewarding.

Davidson's theory of events is illuminating in one way and needs improvement in another. Apart from appreciating the merits of Davidson's theory, we will see what sort of defect it may have and how the inappropriateness of one argument is due to defects in some others. In the following sections, I will reshape the problem by drawing out the distinction between individuation and differentiation, showing, thereby, that what Davidson has considered is better understood as a problem of how to differentiate events under different descriptions. I will accept (3) and

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[10] Ibid. p. 179.

(4) above, with the intention of taking them as the basis of dealing with the problem. I will modify (5) by rejecting (1) and allowing that descriptive sentences in use play a referential role. I will reject (2) and (6) by bringing out the pragmatic implications of the expressions 'fact', 'event' and 'cause'.

By pointing out the many possibilities of having different descriptions of one event besides the ones of employing synonymous expressions, I wish to draw as one conclusion among others that we cannot decide whether different descriptions are of the same event simply by considering the logical forms and semantical meanings of descriptive sentences. We need to know in what circumstances these sentences are employed.

Some philosophers have been trying to save Davidson's theory by offering some mild modifications or giving his theory different explanations. I will consider two such alternative explanations with the intention of showing in what way we may save Davidson's main arguments and how this would change the problem which Davidson originally intends to solve. Hence, I will come to the conclusion that even though his theory of events contributes to our overall understanding of the issue, neither is Davidson's account of the problem as a whole successful, nor is his criterion of individuation (in his terms) usable. Naturally, I will, backed with our criticism and considerations, finally offer some suggestive ideas with the intention of exploring what a

possible new criterion for differentiating events under different descriptions could be.

II. The Concepts of Event and Fact

Donald Davidson strongly urges that an event is not a fact and that they have different forms of linguistic representation; singular terms and sentences respectively.[11] A clear understanding of these problems will assure us a strong foothold for working toward a plausible account of event identity. So, in this section two controversial problems are considered. The first problem is both conceptual and terminological in nature: the uses of the two expressions 'fact' and 'event'. The second is whether we really need the ontological category of event. My discussion of this second problem is limited to those aspects of it that Davidson touches upon.

Philosophers have not so far reached any agreement about how to use the expressions 'fact' and 'event'. Some believe that these two words have the same meaning and some believe that any event can be characterized in terms of facts.[12] Donald Davidson pointed out, "The pressure to treat events as facts is easy, in a way, to understand: both offer themselves as what sentences -- some sentences at least -- refer to or are about."[13] Davidson said also, "I do not see how to interpret some of our plainest language without supposing there are events."[14] If an event is an objective entity in the world, it is most commonly understood as a

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[11] *Fact and Existence*, p. 82.
[12] See Hans Reichenbach, *Elements of Symbolic Logic*, New York, 1947, p. 269.
[13] D. Davidson, "On Events and Event-Descriptions" in *Fact and Existence*, edited by J. Margolis, Oxford, 1969, p. 79.
[14] Ibid.

happening at a time. For example, the sentence

(1) Vesuvius erupted in 79 A.D.

may be used to describe (or even, refer to) an event. But the sentence

(2) John is taller than Alex

is used to designate a fact, but not an event. We certainly notice that we also say

(3) It is a fact that Vesuvius erupted in 79 A.D.

This suggests that 'fact' is a broader notion than 'event'. Our world is eventful and all events seem to share some unique characteristics which are not exemplified by all facts. We employ the expression 'event' with the intention of bringing something into prominence.'[15]

The English word 'event' comes from Latin *eventus* which is, in turn, from *evenire*, "to happen," "to come out," "to occur". Presumably, the term 'event' now has three denotations in our ordinary discourse. (a) That which happens. (b) A change in the properties or relations of a thing. (c) A change (movement, activity, process) between or among things.'[16] A moment's reflection will tell us that

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[15] Many philosophers neglect the differences between the category of fact and the category of event, which might be essential for solving many philosophical problems. For instance, N. L. Wilson seems to believe that event is not a separate category from fact. He says, " ... we have the event, which has as constituents, Columbus, America, the action of discovering, and the time, 1492. We also have the fact that Columbus discovered America in 1492, which has *exactly the same constituents*. How are we to distinguish them? The answer is that we can't, in any manner not helplessly artificial and pointless." See *Philosophical Studies*, vol. 25, p. 314.

[16] See P. A. Angeles, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, Barnes & Noble Books, p. 86.

these three denotations of the term are overlapping, if they are not exactly the same. That which happens must be a process related to either properties or relations, and it must be a change at the very same time. A movement or an activity is something which happens.

What the term 'object' designates, without further qualification, does not exclude events. But we certainly distinguish events as epistemological objects from things, e.g. a table as an object. We do not characterize a table itself as a happening or a process at a time. An event may be physical or mental. Below I will use the expression 'material object' to designate non-event physical entities such as a table without further ado.

The notion of fact is much broader than that of event. The expression 'fact' originates in Latin *facere* which means "to do". We may now use the term 'fact' to mean any of the following. (i) An actually occurring event, quality, relation, state of affairs. That which is actual and real. (ii) A situation or state of affairs that has taken place. (iii) A true description of what has happened. (iv) That which corresponds to a true statement.'' The second use of the term denotes, obviously, only part of what the first use denotes and does not exclude events as denotations. Even though the third and fourth uses are related to descriptions or statements, what they signify includes events. As far as the third use is concerned, some might argue that facts are

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'' See P. A. Angeles, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 93.

true descriptions themselves rather than their contents. This does not seem to be right. When we say "It is blue" and "It has the color of sky", do we, then, have two different facts? We have a lot of synonymous expressions and many different languages, so one single property, accordingly, may have a staggering number of descriptions. So, it seems reasonable to regard a fact as the content of a true description and the content of a true description could be about an occurrence. Therefore, if events are distinguished from other sorts of facts by some significant characteristics, they may, reasonably and beneficially, be classified as a sub-class of facts; or, a sub-class of facts consists of events.

Thus understood, it seems that Davidson is justified in arguing for the need of the category of event. Besides ontological considerations, we can at least appreciate Davidson's argument in relation to giving a natural and acceptable account of the logical form of certain sentences of the most common sort.'* But Davidson's assertion that events are not facts seems without any good reason. Our actual employment of the expressions 'fact' and 'event' confirms what John Austin asserts: 'Phenomena, events, situations, states of affairs are commonly supposed to be genuinely-in-the-world. ... Yet surely of all these we can say that they *are facts*. The collapse of the Germans is an event and is a fact -- was an event and was a fact'.'* So,

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'* See Davidson, "The Individuation of Events".
'* John Austin, "Unfair to Facts", in *Philosophical Papers*,

according to Austin, events are a species of fact.

A brief look at the distinction between states and events here will help us see more clearly the relationship between the two categories of fact and event. Many contemporary linguists of English grammar hold the view that verbs refer to two kinds of things: states and events. G. Leech and J. Svartvik write,

> Broadly, verbs may refer to an EVENT (*ie* a happening thought of as a single occurrence, with a definite beginning and end), or to a STATE (*ie* a state of affairs which continues over a period, and need not have a well-defined beginning and end). ... The same verb can change from one category to another, and the distinction is not always clear: *Did you remember his name?* could refer to either a state or to an event.
>
> To be more accurate, then, we should talk of 'state uses of verbs' and 'event uses of verbs'; but it is convenient to keep to the simpler terms 'state verb' and 'event verb'.[20]

'Be', 'live', 'stay' and 'know' are considered as state verbs, and 'get', 'come', 'leave' and 'hit' etc are considered as event verbs. It seems to me that an event verb designates a change of quality or relation while a state verb stresses the duration or the persistence of the same quality and relation. When an object undergoes a change, some aspects of it may remain stable at the time. So it is not inconsistent to employ both event verbs and state verbs

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[19](cont'd) Oxford, 1961, p. 104.

[20] G. Leech & J. Svartvik, *A Communicative Grammar of English*, Longman, 1975, p. 63.

to describe the same object or process.

It is not very clear why Leech and Svartvik take a definite beginning and end as one of essential features of an event. The sentence 'A bird was flying from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.' may designate the state in which the bird was during that time -- flying. That is to say, we may not concern ourselves with any change in quality or relation when we use the sentence. Furthermore, when we are not sure whether a process has a definite beginning and end, we can still refer to it as an event, for example, 'The earth is moving', which we use to denote a change of the relative position of the sun and the earth.

No matter how we explain the flying of a bird and the movement of the earth, we can put 'It is a fact that ...' before both the sentence 'A bird was flying from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.' and the sentence 'The earth is moving' if they are true in a use. If I say, 'My desk is a blue one', I do not report an event; but being blue is a state in which my desk is. I can also say, 'It is a fact that my desk is a blue one'. This seems to show that states and events are both sub-classes of facts; or, at least, a sub-class of facts contains states and a sub-class of facts contains events.

To classify events as a species of fact is not something arbitrary nor is it only for our convenience of the moment. Such classification really contributes to our understanding of the world. For instance, it dissolves some

philosophical puzzles. F. P. Ramsey holds the view that the event of the death of Caesar should no more be confused with the fact that Caesar died than the King of Italy in 1927 should be confused with the fact that Italy had a King in 1927.[21] This view is unreasonably perplexing for two reasons. First, this view assumes that 'the death of Caesar' and 'Caesar died' do not designate the same thing in the world. In ordinary discourse, it seems that the expression 'the death of Caesar' and the sentence 'Caesar died' are two linguistic representations of one occurrence. To put it another way, these two expressions can both be used to refer to the same event. The assertion "That Caesar died caused a nation-wide disturbance" tells us nothing more and nothing less than the assertion "Caesar's death caused a nation-wide disturbance". What we should not do is to confuse those two linguistic forms: 'the death of Caesar' is a noun phrase and 'Caesar died' is a sentence.[22] So, as soon as we know that they designate the same thing, there seems to be no reason why Ramsey (and Davidson, too) labors at distinguishing those two. Secondly, Ramsey is not justified in drawing the analogy. On the one hand, 'The King of Italy in 1927' is used only to denote a person but not a fact, whereas 'Italy had a King in 1927' is an expression designating a fact;

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[21] F. P. Ramsey, *Foundations of Mathematics*, New York, 1931, p. 138ff.

[22] If we want to use a sentence as a subject of a sentence, we put the word 'that' before the clause sentence to indicate which is the main verb phrase. This does not mean that 'that Caesar died' must designate a different thing from 'the death of Caesar'.

they do not, strictly speaking, have a common denotation. On the other hand, even though 'the death of Caesar' is a singular term, it has the same referent as the description 'Caesar died' does when they are in conventional use.[23] A similar example is the sentence "Vesuvius erupted in 79 A.D." The sentence by itself does not refer to anything in the world, but when it is used, the particular circumstance makes the reference no less clear than the singular term 'the eruption of Vesuvius.' So, it seems that the difference in linguistic form does not necessarily indicate a difference between things in the world. We remember that Ramsey is not talking about linguistic features of these expressions; for he says explicitly that the *event* should not be confused with the *fact*. Therefore, Ramsey's remark is not justified and the inappropriateness of Ramsey's statement lies in his separating events from facts without legitimate reason.[24]

When we say that events are a species of fact, we do not mean that whenever we come across the expression 'event' we can substitute it for the expression 'fact'.[25] When we classify events as a sub-class of facts, what we have in

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[23] Many people feel it difficult to accept this. One reason is that we say 'The death of Caesar was a tragedy', and that we cannot say 'Caesar died was a tragedy'. Apparently, grammatical problems come in here: we need the word 'that' before 'Caesar died' to indicate that it is a clause.

[24] Cf. *Fact and Existence*, p. 65.

[25] Philosophers also argue about the relationship between events and propositions. For instance, W. Sellars contends that events are a species of proposition. It seems to me what Sellars believes is not radically different from what we have been arguing for. See Sellars' "Actions and Events" in *Nous*, vol. 7.

mind is the extension of these terms, because our current issue is the identity of actual happenings. Some philosophers argue that events are not facts by saying that we can utter the sentence

(4) I saw the event of _____,

but not

(5) *I saw the fact that _____.[26]

And similarly,

(4') *I know the event of _____.

(5') I know the fact that _____.

Here what we should bear in mind is that different words and expressions, besides their semantic meanings, have different pragmatic implications. One crucial point here is that when we use the word 'event', we stress the duration or process of what we are referring to; when we convey the idea that a change or changes occur, we want to use a word to bring out this specific feature of the world. The constant change is so important a feature that we definitely wish to have a distinct category to bring it out. At the same time, we also strongly desire to have a clear idea of how this feature relates to others specified by other categories. When we emphasize the existence of a happening, we tend to use the word 'fact'. When we say "It is a fact that _____" and

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[26] For example, Zeno Vendler simply says that facts are not in space and time at all. "They are not located, cannot move, split, or spread, and they do not occur, take place, or last in any sense." See his *Linguistics in Philosophy*, p. 144. Vendler therefore draws the conclusion that events are not facts. It is strange that he neglects some other important linguistic features of these crucial expressions when he is doing *linguistics in philosophy*.

"_____ is a fact", we mean nothing but the assertion of the existence of something which might be an event. We do not concern ourselves with any other features of what we say except its existence when we use the expression 'fact'. When we deny a fact, we simply mean that there is no such existence, including happenings, which corresponds to our descriptions. When we deny an event, we deny the event as an existent, i.e. as a fact. If we want to pour the water in cup A into cup B, we do not have to find cup C and pour the water into cup C first. To deny an existence by denying its duration is simply not our common practice. When we intend to express the idea that there is nothing in the world corresponding to an assertion, we do not say that no happening corresponds to the assertion; for it does not exclude the possibility that the assertion is true.[27] So, from the fact that we say neither "I saw the fact that _____" nor "I know the event of _____", it does not follow that events are not facts. Similarly, from the fact that we do not say that facts occur, it does not follow that everything to which we use the word 'fact' to refer does not occur. Occurrence is the peculiar feature of a sub-class of facts.

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[27] This might be a counter argument against Vendler who seems to believe that we cannot deny an event but we can deny a fact, therefore, events are not facts. See Vendler, *Linguistics in Philosophy*.

III. Individuation and Differentiation

Donald Davidson does not clearly distinguish between the problem of individuation of events and the problem of differentiation of events.[2*] The title of Davidson's well known paper about events is "The Individuation of Events"; however, he sets himself the task of individuating events by asking, at the very beginning of the paper, "When are events identical, when distinct? What criteria are there for deciding one way or the other in particular cases?" At the end of his paper, Davidson writes, "Individuation at its best requires sorts or kinds that give a principle for counting."[2'] But, by having a closer look at his arguments to establish his thesis, we see that the problem Davidson actually considered is better understood as a problem of differentiation rather than that of individuation.

[2*] Some other philosophers address this point with different intentions. P. F. Strawson separates criteria of distinctness from criteria of reidentification in his *Individuals* (London:1959) p. 203ff. S. Hampshire mentions principles of individuation and principles of classification in his *Thought and Action* (London:1959), p. 12. M. J. Woods discusses the distinction between principles of individuation and criterion of identity in his "Identity and Individuation" in *Analytical Philosophy*, edited by R. J. Butler (Oxford:1968). But what they talk about is roughly limited to material objects. I do not see how the distinctions drawn by those philosophers could properly apply to other individuals such as properties, numbers and *events*. M. Brand's "Identity Conditions for Events" in *American Philosophical Quarterly* (vol. 14, 1977) draws the distinction between identity conditions and identifying conditions, which is closer to what I have in mind. Nevertheless, it seems that Castañeda's account of this problem is the most profound so far. See Castañeda's "Individuation and Non-Identity: A New Look" in *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 12.

[2'] Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, p. 180.

The term 'individuation' means 'to discriminate from among others of a class or species'.[30] This is to say, presumably, when we are able to individuate, we can tell individuals apart, or we can count the individuals before us. However, it is quite doubtful that we can answer the question "When are events identical?" whenever we can discriminate from among others as individuals. Let us examine a case in which we are indeed able to discriminate from among others of a class. A person is examining a large circle formed by a million newly-produced pencils. He starts off at point P and goes back to P after examining all the pencils. He can still discriminate the pencil at P from others, i.e. to tell that pencil is a genuine individual. But, he is not sure whether this pencil is really the first one he examined when he just started. Now he has the problem of determining whether the pencils examined at P are identical. If he cannot solve this problem, he can still continue the process of checking over one by one (as individuals!) if he wishes. In other words, this person can, to some extent, tell that *a* pencil is *a* pencil without knowing how many individual pencils there are. If you show this person a pencil, he has no trouble telling you that it is *a* pencil. If you show him twice, he has trouble to tell whether you have one or more than one. This tells us, at least, that being able to discriminate from among others of a class does not necessarily mean being able to tell which

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[30] See P. A. Angeles, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 131.

is the same as which. And, there seems no reason to think that the case of events are less complicated than that of material objects like pencils. This is one of the reasons why we need to know when events are identical as Davidson asks. To be exact, Davidson writes,

> What we want, rather, is a statement of necessary and sufficient conditions for identity of events, a satisfactory filling for the blank in:
> If *x* and *y* are events, then *x* = *y* if and only if _____.[31]

We do not know at this point whether *x* and *y* are events or just one event: this is exactly the problem. How can Davidson say here explicitly "If *x* and *y* are *events* (my italics), ..."? Davidson explains that here *x* and *y* are singular terms referring to events. He believes also that a singular term refers to *a* particular. Thus, his formulation of the identity problem presupposes the knowledge of individuation. This is to say, if we do not first know whether *x* is *an* individual and whether *y* is *an* individual, we simply cannot ask if *x* = *y*. So, it seems very clear now that what Davidson really wants to offer is not a criterion for counting in the sense of telling individuals apart. There is something more.

Logically speaking, of course, if we are able to differentiate events then we are able to individuate them,

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[31] Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, p. 172.

i.e. we can tell individuals from non-individuals and one sort of individual from other sorts of individual. But the reverse does not seem to be true.[32] This is one the indications that we may have a general theory of differentiation without having an articulated theory of individuation at the same time, or any particular formulation of the problem of individuation would not affect a theory of differentiation in general. To draw out the distinction between individuation and differentiation precisely is a crucial step for formulating and understanding a criterion for identifying the same event under different descriptions.

Our brief reflection has shown us that the problem of individuation of events and the problem of differentiation of events are genuinely distinct. Our experience tells us that when a person is shown one thing twice, he can easily tell that what is shown to him is an individual thing each time; but, *probably*, he may be puzzled by the question 'Are they the same thing?' Or, to put it in Davidson's way, he may not be able to fill the blank in "$x = y$ if and only if _____". When we deal with the problems of how to distinguish individuals from non-individuals,[33] and of how

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[32] Geach's Relative Identity Thesis is a way of seeing how differentiation is tied to individuation. But Geach's approach tends to obscure the distinction between the two. W. Alston argues against Geach that what identity proposition presupposes is successful singular reference. It seems fairly clear that singular reference, in turn, presupposes individuation, and this confirms the distinction between individuation and differentiation. See *Philosophical Review*, vol. XCIII, 1984.

[33] For instance, since individuation is problem-oriented, a

to distinguish one sort of individual from individuals of other sorts, we inquire into the criterion (or, criteria) of individuation. For instance, some philosophers argue that a biological species is an individual. What these philosophers are trying to do is to show what is an individual, not to show how to tell whether two individuals are identical. Even if there were only one individual in the universe, we would still have the problem of individuation; for we are entitled to know clearly what is an individual and what is non-individual. But if there are at least two individuals or what seem to be two occurrences of one individual, we have the problem of determining whether they are the same -- this is the problem of differentiation.

It is probably the case that whenever we solve the problem of differentiation, we solve the problem of individuation. But this shows neither that individuation and differentiation are one and the same problem, nor that we can solve the problem of differentiation without solving the problem of individuation in the first place. Properly speaking, individuation is a premise of differentiation; for it is obvious that we cannot tell one individual from another if we do not know what is counted as an individual for a particular case.

It is extremely important to point out here that the individuation of a particular kind of individual is problem-oriented, that is, we may classify things and events

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[33](cont'd) hand might not be an individual for a particular purpose.

etc. in the world into different classes of individuals according to different purposes. When we say a species is an individual, we do not mean that a dog in a particular species is not an individual in any case. A book is an individual and a series of books may also be an individual. But the criterion of individuating a book is, perhaps, the shape and material, while the criteria of individuating a series of books may have to include the relevant topic as an essential condition. A stone is an individual and a throwing of a stone is another individual. It is logically possible to have a general and single criterion for individuating everything, but in everyday practice, we do use different criteria for individuation. We may also have many ways of differentiating individuals; or, to put it in other words, we may have some particular ways of differentiating different sorts of events. Nevertheless, to have a general criterion of differentiating is also plausible and strongly desirable. At least, we should have a general account of differentiation, which includes an elucidation of the distinction between differentiation and individuation.

It is now not very difficult to see that the problem of identifying an event under different descriptions is a problem of differentiation. As we notice, the correct use of the word 'identity' in dealing with the issue of differentiation presupposes the knowledge of individuation.[34] It is hardly imaginable that we treat every

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[34] J. M. Morris characterizes the identity problem as 'Under what circumstances do we say that two sentences describe or

individual we encounter as a distinct entity. I see a one dollar note in my pocket at 10:00 a.m., then I have a nap after. At 11:00 a.m., I see a one dollar note in my pocket again, and I also remember that I saw a one dollar note at 10:00 a.m. I do not therefore think, at 11:00 a.m., that I actually have two different one dollar notes, i.e. two entities. We know that one entity may have different relationships with other entities and we may encounter and represent one entity in many different ways, even though we may not be fully aware of the significance of this fact in philosophical speculation about event identity. Anyway, one thing seems fairly clear in our current case. If I want to be sure that I actually have *one* dollar (one entity), I have to be sure, in the first place, that I see *a* one dollar note (an individual) at 10:00 a.m. and *a* one dollar note (an individual) at 11:00 a.m. To see this more clearly, let us look at one of Davidson's examples.

(6) Donald flipped the switch,

and

(7) Donald turned on the light.

Accordingly, (6) and (7) are both descriptions of individual events, i.e. they both designate happenings through time in the world.[35] Philosophers are still arguing whether they are

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[34](cont'd) designate the same event?' This seems to me the clearest formulation of the problem so far. See J. M. Morris, "Non-events" in *Philosophical Studies*,, vol. 34, p. 321.

[35] Just remind ourselves that we are not concerned ourselves with the problem of transworld identity. From the fact that description (6) does not necessarily describe the same event as description (7) does, it does not follow that what (6)

of the same event, but perhaps nobody doubts that they are of individual events, simple or complex. This confirms what we said earlier that knowing what is an individual does not mean knowing when individuals are identical.

The problem of differentiation of events under different descriptions is partially based on the fact that we may have more than one description of one single event. We have different descriptions largely because (i) descriptions may be given at different times at different places by different people; (ii) an event may be a complex, i.e. has different parts or different features; (iii) we may employ synonymous expressions in our descriptions, and (iv) people may have different interests in the same thing. To be sure, one person may have several descriptions given by himself, but, sometimes, does not know whether they are of the same thing. Even though he claims that his descriptions are of the same thing, he may simply be wrong.[34]

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[33](cont'd) and (7) describe are distinct in *this* world.

[34] This indicates that the problem of identifying events under different descriptions is in no way only a matter of communication, or just an issue of speaker's intentions. The problem is both epistemological and metaphysical.

IV. Understanding Event-Descriptions

Evidence shows that we need the category of event in order to designate a special sort of entity in the world and we need to individuate events and differentiate events, in doing both of which we often employ event-descriptions. What is a description of an event? Is it just a phrase or a sentence? Do we always use a single sentence just to describe a single event, or do we use a sentence of the same type to describe different events under different circumstances? If a sentence of the same type does not necessarily describe one event, what enables us to distinguish these descriptions as of different events? If these questions are to be answered properly, we would have a clearer understanding of Davidson's theory, and any plausible solution to the problem of identifying events under different descriptions must be well grounded.

1. Davidson on descriptions

Davidson talks about descriptions of events in many places in his writings. For instance, in "The Individuation of Events", he says that the difficulty of individuating events arises in relation to all identity questions; for only one thing is identical with itself and two things are never identical. How can we talk about event identity in a significant way? Davidson proposes to substitute for questions about identities questions about sentences about identities. Then, according to Davidson, we can avoid asking

the somewhat paradoxical question "When are events identical?" What we may ask significantly is the question: If a and b are linguistic expressions referring to events, under what conditions is the sentence 'a = b' true?[37]

I believe that this move made by Davidson is legitimate and illuminating; for an event is certainly identical with itself and it is only relative to our knowledge that the question arises whether what appears as two events or what are described differently are identical. To be modest and precise, whether two descriptions are of the same event is a meaningful question of identity. Nevertheless, Davidson's notion of event-description is not wholly satisfactory, which might prevent us from seeing clearly the significance of Davidson's move and bringing this move into full play. For Davidson, (i) sentences do not refer to events because, for instance, in the sentence 'Caesar died' there is no singular term which refers to an event, and (ii) that Caesar died is not an event but a fact.[38] Obviously, Davidson's ideas are based on the assumption that nothing except singular terms can refer to events, which seems in need of clarification and justification. If a person calls in an emergency, "My house is on fire", he reports an occurrence. Nobody would ask him to use a singular term referring to the event in order to refer to it.

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[37] Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, p. 163. Davidson says that here 'a' and 'b' are singular terms. I think if we want to have a general account of the problem of differentiation, we should expand our consideration to any referring expressions.

[38] See Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, p. 169.

Davidson's account of descriptions of events, on the other hand, is greatly obscured by his mentioning a particular kind of description. He writes,

> I flip the switch, turn on the light, and illuminate the room. Unbeknownst to me, I also alert a prowler to the fact I am home. Here I do not do four things, but only one, of which four descriptions have been given.[3']

Here the peculiarity lies in the fact that the four descriptions are given by one person who knows what he has in mind when he offers those descriptions (Notice also "I flip the switch" is a sentence.). But what Davidson has in mind when he offers this argument is unclear. Nobody doubts that his illuminating the room by flipping the switch and hence turning on the light is a perfectly good individual; however, there seems no reason why Davidson alleges that my flipping the switch is the same event (or the same thing, in Davidson's term) as my turning on the light, without any further qualification. First, it is quite possible that my turning on the light required a little (no matter how little) more time than that required for flipping the switch, and that my illuminated the room, in turn, needed a little more time than that of turning on the light. It is also possible that my flipping the switch needed more time

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[3'] D. Davidson, "Actions, Reasons, and Causes", in *The Journal of Philosophy*, LX (1967)., p. 686. The second point we have commented upon already and the first will be touched upon in the following paragraphs and the next section.

than my turning on the light. Consequently, we are justified in saying that my flipping the switch is a different event from my turning on the light, if my flipping the switch occupies a different lapse of time from my turning on the light in a particular case. Secondly, there is nothing odd in saying that my flipping the switch is the direct cause of my turning on the light and that I turned on the light is, in turn, the direct cause of my illuminating the room. Thus, these events have both different causal relations and different spatial positions, though we, of course, admit that my illuminating the room by flipping the switch and hence turning on the light has a larger spatial position.[40] So, even according to Davidson's criterion of exactly the same causes and effects, we cannot say that my flipping the switch is definitely identical with my turning on the light. Therefore, when Davidson asserts that what he describes is *only one thing*, he certainly has a onesided view.[41]

Unfortunately, many critics of Davidson go to the other extreme. A. I. Goldman, for example, argues in his *A Theory of Human Action* that if X and Y, in general, are identical, then X must have all and only the properties that Y has; and

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[40] It is also possible for my flipping the switch and my turning on the light to occur at the same place and the same time.

[41] For the time being, I leave the problem open that whether the four descriptions in Davidson's passage are of the same *action* rather than of *event*. If what Davison has in mind is *the action* (for he says that "I do not do four things"), then what I say here shows that these descriptions describe more than an action, i.e. they imply possible causal relations and processes other than one body movement. More will be said later on.

since my flipping the switch has a property of being the cause of my turning on the light while my turning on the light does not have the property of being the cause of my turning on the light, they must be distinct. Therefore, Goldman concludes that what these four descriptions describe cannot be one and the same event. But, one of Goldman's premises is not true. We should bear in mind that an event may be a complex and different descriptions may take up different features (sometimes inessential features) or facets of the event. And, as we pointed out above, it might also be the case that the process of my flipping the switch is longer than that of my turning on the light. In this case, strictly and philosophically speaking, only a phase of my flipping the switch is the cause of my turning on the light.[42] So we should not, as Goldman does implicitly, ignore the possibility that 'I flipped the switch' and 'I turned on the light' are descriptions of one event.[43] In other words, Davidson points out how different descriptions could be of one individual event without awareness that this is only one possibility among many others, while Goldman

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[42] And also, Goldman does not think that we may use those two descriptions to designate one body movement, i.e. one action. Different descriptions do not necessarily designate different properties.

[43] An event may be a complex in the sense that it has different parts, facets or features even though its parts may not be other events. Thus, to take Goldman's example that John has just been quarreling with his wife and answers the phone by saying 'hello' very loudly, we do not see why Goldman thinks that John's saying 'hello' and John's saying 'hello' very loudly could not be the same event. See Alvin, I. Goldman, *A Theory of Human Action*, New Jersey, 1970, pp. 1-3.

overstresses that flipping the switch and turning on the light may have different causal characteristics so they are not identical and hence Davidson is wrong. Davidson's view is, as a whole, onesided and inappropriate. But it is not wrong for the reason Goldman thinks it is. We now see clearly that each side has both some good reasons and some fault, but neither side does the job properly by itself.

2. *The linguistic features of event-descriptions*

Relative to our language system, we have, presumably, two ways of describing events. First, we have sentences which contain those verbs designating changes, happenings and processes. Davidson asserts that sentences do not refer to events and that sentences could be descriptions of events. By this, does he even mean that a descriptive sentence could not be used to refer to a particular event? Throughout his writings about events, Davidson seems not to pay much attention to the use of linguistic expressions and simply says an expression itself describes or refers to something. We will turn to this point later on. Anyway, sentences with those verbs that do not designate changes, happenings or processes are usually not used as a description of events. For instance, the sentence

(8) She is bright

describes a person but not an event. As many contemporary linguists hold, 'be' is a stative verb rather than an event verb. Moreover, a negative sentence is not intended to be a

description of events. For example, we do not think that the description

(9) She did not start sewing

reports an event; perhaps we say that it describes a fact. And we are reluctant to say that it describes a state; for it tells us that she was not in a certern state rather than specifies a state in which she was. Nevertheless, not every sentence which contains an action verb can be a description of an event. The sentence

(10) Mary kept sitting there all day long

may be best characterized as a description of a state of affairs; for it does not designate a change of quality or relation, which is the essential characteristics of events.

From what we have discussed above, it seems fairly clear that verbs themselves do not refer to occurrences in the world; that is, we cannot determine the reference of a sentence simply by looking at part of the sentence -- verb phrase. Rather, it is the 'event use' of a verb which refers to something. In contextual use, the verb 'sit' in the sentence "She is sitting over there in a chair" may be best characterized, generally, as in a 'state use'. In the sentence "She is sitting down", the verb 'sit' is an example of the 'event use' of a verb.

Secondly, we do employ noun phrases to designate event entities, such as 'the death of Caesar'. We notice that a noun phrase which is an event-description might always be somehow changed into a description in sentence form whose

content is equivalent to the original noun phrase. To put it in an other way, noun phrases as event-descriptions may be regarded as nominalizations of descriptions in sentence form. When they are in conventional use, for instance, the sentence 'Caesar died' says nothing more than the singular term 'the death of Caesar' does as far as that particular event is concerned. This makes us even more suspicious about Davidson's claim that one refers to something while the other does not.

3. The use of descriptive sentences

The complexity of event-descriptions is to a great extent rooted in objective event entities themselves. An event is usually a complex, i.e. an event may be analysed into some other events, or an event may have many non-event parts or many distinct facets or features. For instance, what the sentence

(11) Lucrezia's poisoning Rinaldo

is used to designate may consist in the following events.

(12) Lucrezia's posting poisoning material.

(13) Rinaldo's receiving the poisoning material.

(14) Rinaldo's taking the material.

(15) Rinaldo's dying.

Any of the above sentences may be used to describe the event of Lucrezia's poisoning of Rinaldo, but they describe different phases of the event. So, generally speaking, sentences (11) -- (15) do not designate exactly one and the

same entity.

However, when we come to examine some other examples, we often find that we cannot tell whether what we have are descriptions of the same event or not simply by looking at the descriptive sentences themselves. Let us look at the following sentences.

(16) Mary is shouting.

(17) Mary is yelling at John.

Are (16) and (17) descriptions of one event? Maybe and maybe not. If sentence (16) is used to describe Mary's shouting at her children of whom none are named John, then (16) and (17) are not descriptions of one event.

Even one descriptive sentence uttered by different people may not be of the same event. When a person A says 'Vesuvius erupted in 79 A.D.' and B says 'Vesuvius erupted in 79 A.D.', we still have the problem of determining whether A and B are talking about the same event; for (i) Vesuvius might have erupted several times in 79 A.D.,[44] and (ii) it might be the case that there were more than one entity which were named Vesuvius in 79 A.D. So it is undesirable to say that A and B have the same description without any further qualification. Two uses of one sentence may be two distinct descriptions. Hence, I wish to characterize a description of an event as a linguistic expression in particular use.

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[44] Davidson uses this to argue that sentences do not refer to events.

As we pointed out above, an event may have many distinct facets or features. When we describe or refer to them, it is, presumably, unlikely that we exhaust these facets or features. We use the expression 'the chairman of the department' not to designate a property only but an entity which has the property of being a chairman of the department *and* many other properties. Similarly, we may use descriptions of different features to pick out one and the same event. If the expression 'the chairman of the department' is not in use, perhaps it does not designate a particular entity in the world.[45]

Many philosophers do not clearly distinguish between a sentence and the use of a sentence; or, perhaps, they have not fully recognized the significance of this distinction. Davidson is an example. He declares that he is going along with Ramsey who wrote 'The event which is of that sort is called the death of Caesar, and should no more be confused with the fact that Caesar died than the King of Italy should be confused with the fact that Italy has a King.' Davidson believes that the sentence 'Caesar died' asserts the existence of an event (but not a particular event), while 'Caesar's death' is quantified over in it. Only the singular

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[45] Davidson correctly points out, "... We must distinguish firmly between causes and the features we hit on for describing them, and hence between the question whether a statement says truly that one event caused another and the further question whether the events are characterized in such a way that we can deduce, or otherwise infer, from laws or other causal lore, that the relation was causal." See his *Essays on Actions and Events*, p. 155. We should always bear this in mind when we consider the problem of differentiation of events under different descriptions.

term 'Caesar's death' refers to a particular event.[4] But actually, the sentence 'Caesar died' asserts nothing by itself without being used by people. Suppose a person practicing caligraghy writes 'Caesar died' before Caesar was born, his employment of the sentence 'Caesar died' does not assert the existence of any event. Only when the sentence is in its conventional use does it assert something. So is the phrase 'Caesar's death'. When this phrase is in use, it does presuppose the existence of the event of the death of Caesar. Consequently, Davidson's remarks that 'Caesar's death' does not assert as 'Caesar died' does and that 'Caesar died' does not refer as 'Caesar's death' does are plainly inappropriate.[5] More seriously, Davidson's argument about the sameness of my flipping the switch and my turning on the light suffers the same sort of defect, simply because he tries to settle the issue of identity without considering the different circumstances in which those descriptions can be employed.

From what we said above, it follows that we cannot ask whether two sentences describe the same event without knowing whether these two sentences are in use. Furthermore, we will not know whether two descriptions are of the same event without knowing under what circumstances descriptive sentences are employed. This will be more clearly seen in the next section. Anyway, we have so far defined and shaped

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[4] See *Fact and Existence*, p. 82.
[5] I will say more, in the next section, about how the contextual use of a sentence may refer to a particular and why it is important.

our problem: the problem of the identity of what actually happens is seen as a problem of differentiation rather than individuation, i.e. the problem of differentiation of events is largely a problem of identifying the same event under different descriptions.

V. No Differentiation Without Reference

The main problem with which we are concerning ourselves is identifying the same event under different descriptions, i.e. we want to know if actually just one entity is described when we have more than one description. At first blush, this seems just to raise the question of speaker's intentions. When a speaker describes something by using some linguistic devices, he intends what is described. Hence, it seems that we have to know whether speaker's intentions are the same in order to know whether different descriptions are of the same thing in the world. If different descriptions are given by one speaker, the problem of whether just one entity is involved can often, I believe, be determined by the speaker's intention. If descriptions are given by more than one speaker, or, if the speaker's intention cannot be pinned down, then we have to know how each description is used besides its semantic meaning. To be exact, we have to know whether there is a particular thing which is the referent of any description concerned, even though knowing that every description refers to something does not solve the problem of whether just one entity is referred to. I have made the claim that there are two types of event descriptions: noun phrases and descriptive sentences. In this section, I will offer some arguments against Davidson in order to show more clearly how descriptive sentences can play a referential role, and how this is essential to the problem of differentiation under discussion.

Events are objective entities in the world, and people are very much interested in them. People may sometimes not employ linguistic devices when they individuate and differentiate events, but very often we find ourselves in the situation that what we have in hand is different linguistic descriptions and we have no idea about whether they are of one or of more than one event. People may have different interests and intentions when they offer or receive any description; for example, they do not have to know what in the world exactly the descriptions they have designate in order to carry on the communication among themselves. But, if a person wants to know whether different descriptions are actually of one entity in the world, he has to know the applicability of the descriptions concerned to the individuals being described. Some descriptive sentences may designate nothing in the world; that is, there is nothing in the world corresponding to the descriptive sentence. If we come to know that different descriptions are of one entity, the knowledge of whether each description is linked to an individual thing is essential. If a speaker does not know this, presumably, he would admit that he does not really know what he intends to describe in the first place, much less whether just one individual is described. If it is impossible for other people to know this, then by no means can these people continue their business of differentiation under different descriptions. All of this shows that the knowledge of the relationship between

descriptions and what is described is required for differentiation.

One very common connection between a description and a thing in reality is that the former refers to the latter by designating a specific property of the latter. A physical object can be picked out by its inessential features. For example, we may use the description "the author of *Word and Object*" to pick out the person named 'Quine' who has many other characteristics we can describe. An event can be picked out in a similar way. The sentence 'I flipped the switch' in contextual use may designate an event of which my flipping is only a facet. As we pointed out earlier, this is one of the reasons why one event may have many different descriptions. The contextual use of the expressions or the circumstance in which linguistic devices are employed helps pick out a particular in the world. When we assert truly that this particular description is of the same event as that description, we definitely need to know of which event this description is. It seems that Davidson would agree in this; for he gives different descriptions which are believed to be of one event and the sentences Davidson offers as examples are non-synonymous.

However, Davidson's account of event descriptions involves an implicit inconsistency. On the one hand, he firmly asserts that we may have more than one non-synonymous description in sentence form of the same event.[**] On the

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[**] See *Essays on Actions and Events*, p. 4. A. I. Goldman, J. J. Thomson and many others have had a thorough discussion of

other hand, he says that the descriptions in sentence form do not refer to particular events; for what a sentence asserts is existential and general.[49] I wonder: if the descriptions in sentence form do not play a referential role, how does Davidson know that they are of *the same* event, i.e. only one entity is involved? Does Davidson just consider one aspect of the issue and therefore, consciously or unconsciously, neglect the other aspect?

Davidson seems to firmly believe that we can determine whether a linguistic expression refers to something by looking at the linguistic features of the expression, and that a sentence does not refer to a particular thing as a singular term does. Davidson says,

> A sentence such as 'Vesuvius erupted in 79 A.D.' no more refers to an individual event than 'There is a fly in here' refers to an individual fly. Of course there may be just one eruption that verifies the first sentence and just one fly that verifies the second; but that is beside the point. The point is that neither sentence can properly be interpreted as referring or describing, or being about, a particular eruption or fly. No singular term for such is in the offing.[50]

However, it is not clear how Davidson could just assert

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[48](cont'd) Davidson's example. They seem to believe that by careful analysing Davidson's descriptions we see that they are not of the same event. So, the focus of their rather long discussion seems not to be about whether we can describe one event differently.

[49] See *Fact and Existence*, p. 82.

[50] Ibid.

this. One may well accept the attributive/referential distinction and argue that in some circumstances we have an attributive use of a sentence or a singular term without being concerned with its reference (whatever it may be), and in some other circumstances we do have a referential use of a sentence. Therefore, even though the sentence "The book is on the table" contains a singular term, we may have an attributive use of it and simply mean "There is a book. It is on the table." And, when we have a referential use of the sentence "There is a book" in a particular circumstance, we may uniquely pick something out.

As we know, that there is only one entity involved is what we are trying to determine rather than a presupposition. It must be the case that there is a connection between descriptions and what is described, which is the basis of considering whether two descriptive sentences are actually linked with just one entity. When Davidson says that his descriptions describe one thing, he talks not merely about descriptions, he also touches upon the thing -- what is described. Or, to be more exact, he means that the objects which are picked out by the descriptions are one and the same entity. It seems that this sort of "picking out" can be nothing but a referential relation, i.e. what is referred to by one description is identical with what is referred to by another description. The problem of differentiation of events under different descriptions needs the referential relation between events

and the descriptions of the events. So, if Davidson has not shown us how we should bridge the gap between descriptive sentences and event entities, there seems no good reason why Davidson holds the view that descriptions in sentence form do not refer to events.

Generally speaking, a linguistic description, no matter whether a singular term or a sentence, does not by itself refer to any particular thing in the world. For instance, neither 'The unicorn in Edmonton is red' nor 'the professor of symbolic logic' refers to any particular object or a particular person in the world. Only when they are in contextual use might they pick out a certain entity. And, as we discussed in the last section, there seems no good reason to believe that a sentence could not function in the same way as a singular term does if the sentence is in contextual use. If a person knows that Caesar died and sincerely asserts, 'Caesar died', it seems reasonable to say that this person's utterance refers to the particular historic occurrence in ancient Rome. But if a person believes that the death of Caesar is only a fiction conceived by a novelist, and utters, 'The death of Caesar ...', we could not, perhaps, say that his utterance refers to any object or occurrence in the world. As a result, one plausible way to avoid Davidson's inconsistency is to allow descriptions in sentence form to have referring function.[5']

[5'] Some may say that Davidson's inconsistency here is only a slip of tongue or mind. But if our analysis of the descriptions in sentence form is not mistaken, we see that the scope of the problem of differentiation is broader than

Some might argue, on behalf of Davidson, that when Davidson says that a sentence does not refer to an event, what he has in mind is that the sentence 'Caesar died' is about the person Caesar rather than about the event of the death of Caesar, i.e. it is a description of a person. But this cannot save Davidson's argument. First, Davidson contends that 'Brutus stabbed Caesar' and 'Brutus killed Caesar' describe one and the same *event*. Secondly, it sounds odd to say that the sentence 'Caesar died' is a description merely of a person rather than of an event. When we describe something, we take up properties or features of what we intend to describe. For instance, we say, "George is tall".[52] What we mean is that being tall is a property of George or George possesses the property of being tall. But when we employ the sentence "Caesar died", we do not mean that the word 'died' specifies a property or feature possessed by Caesar. We mean something happened to Caesar and Caesar ceased to exist. When Caesar was alive, he never had the property specified by the word 'died'. And when Caesar ceased to exist, it is absurd to attribute a property or a feature to him. All this suggests that the sentence 'Caesar died' is not only about the person named Caesar, but also about something else which is not reducible to the person Caesar -- the event of the death of Caesar.

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[51](cont'd) Davidson thought and that this is what a general theory of event should not miss. Thus, Davidson's slip, if it is, certainly reveals something.

[52] Presumably, this is a stative sentence.

Davidson's argument about non-reference of sentences seems to arise from the worry that the meaning of any sentence is general, i.e. of something of a certain sort rather than of a particular. As we have seen, the bridge between the general and the particular is the contextual use of linguistic expressions by people. Even with singular terms, if we do not use them, more often than not, we do not know which particular entity in the world it picks out. Being clear about this, now we conclude this section by the following statements: (i) when descriptive sentences are not in a particular use, they neither refer to nor describe anything particular in the world, and (ii) when they are in such use, they may refer to something particular in the world. As far as the problem of identity of event under different descriptions is concerned, the referential role of event-descriptions becomes essential.

VI. Two Explanations that Make Sense of Davidson

From what we discussed above, we see what sort of possible defects Davidson's theory of events may suffer. But we should not think that Davidson's argument could yield so easily; for it might be the case that I have not correctly grasped the point of Davidson's argument. When he offers us a criterion of individuation (in his terms) of events, Davidson does not, perhaps, fully express what he has in mind; or, Davidson himself does not have sufficient space to clearly distinguish what he has in mind. Trying to make sense of what Davidson has said about events, I wish to briefly consider two possible explanations. The purpose of so doing is to show what sorts of qualification he needs and how this would alter the task he originally sets for himself, if Davidson wants to save his arguments as they are.

1. Individuation of human actions only

Generally speaking, many philosophers are still not very clear about the motive behind Davidson's claim that the following sentences are descriptions of one and the same event.

(i) I flipped the switch.

(ii) I turned on the light.

(iii) I illuminated the room.

(iv) I alerted a prowler.

As Goldman[53] has pointed out, even if we follow Davidson's criterion of exactly the same causes and effects, what these sentences describe do not have precisely the same causes and effects. For example, my flipping the switch might be the cause of my illuminating the room, and the cause cannot be the same thing as its effect. How is it possible that Davidson does not see this point?[54]

Let us first briefly consider the relationship between the categories of event and action. We may use the word 'action' to characterize the movement of my car, or a rolling stone which has little to do with my will. This is not how Davidson uses the word 'action' in his writings. He concerns himself with human actions only such as flipping, stabbing, killing, etc. So, for the moment, let us just consider the relationship between events and human actions. Intuitively, all human actions are events, because human actions involve physical movements through time and space. But it is not true to say that every event is a human action; for an unknown eruption of a volcano on Mars is also an event in the philosophical sense of the term. Thus, the most obvious relation between those two categories is that actions are a sub-class of events. When we examine the examples in Davidson's writings about events, we find that

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[53] See his *A Theory of Human Action*.

[54] Davidson says, "It is a matter of the first importance that we may, and often do, describe actions and events in terms of their causal relations -- their causes, their effects, or both." "... events are identical if and only if they have *exactly* (my italics) the same causes and effects." See *Essays on Actions and Events*, pp. 178--179.

they are almost all about human actions. If we count how many human actions are involved in descriptions (i) -- (iv) above, we will find just *one*! If we look at the sentences 'Brutus stabbed Caesar' and 'Brutus killed Caesar', we find, again, only one action of Brutus. In this case, the killing might be a process including the action of stabbing as a part.[55] Therefore, it is perfectly all right to draw the conclusion that only one human action is involved in descriptions (i) -- (iv). Hence, if what Davidson has in mind is the individuation (not differentiation) of human actions (not events), then Davidson's arguments are right.

But is this really the case? No. First, it is very unlikely that a philosopher is so careless that he uses two categories of different kinds interchangeably. Secondly, Davidson believes that actions are a species of event[56] and declares firmly that the subject has been "the individuation of events quite generally, not kinds of events."[57]

Clearly enough, one human action may initiate many events. For instance, my pushing of the first domino causes the fall of the second which causes the fall of the third and the last one is caused to drop onto the ground. The dropping and the fallings of the dominos are not exactly the

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[55] We can use the expression 'killing' to answer different questions and hence convey different information. Here are three typical cases. (1) 'Killing' is used to designate an action only. "What did he *do*?" "He killed him." (2) 'Killing' is used to designate a process ended by the death of the killed. "When did he kill him?" "Last night." (3) 'Killing' is used to designate a result. "What came out finally?" "He killed him."

[56] See *Essays on Actions and Events*, p. 163.

[57] Ibid. p. 180.

same as my pushing. Therefore, if it *is* the case that what Davidson tries to do is to individuate actions only, even though he explicitly says (Should we take this as a slip, again?) that he offers a theory of events in general, we still found two faults in his account. (i) His analysis of the descriptions which appear in his writings is incomplete, i.e. he does not bring out the whole content of the sentences. For instance, the sentence "I illuminated the room" is not merely a description of human action; it also implies the physical process of the room's being illuminated. Moreover, it might be a statement of achievement. (ii) He fails to recognize and point out that his analysis is incomplete. Anyway, Davidson does come to his general conclusions about events from his examples, and we should look for some other explanation which may avoid any trouble that Davidson faces, and see whether we may eventually save Davidson's argument as a whole.

2. Speaker reference

If what Davidson actually has in mind is the individuation of *events* in general as he explicitly claims, there is another explanation which may possibly save his arguments. The distinction between semantic reference and speaker reference is widely discussed, even though it is unclear whether it is philosophically interesting to appeal such distinction in the issue of event differentiation. To avoid any unnecessary discussion in my present paper, we

just cast a glance at a typical account of the distinction given by Donnellan.

K. S. Donnellan writes, "People refer and expressions refer".[58] The former is speaker reference and the latter is semantic reference. To be precise, a speaker reference is what a speaker intends to refer to when he uses a referring expression, no matter whether the expression can be truly applied to the referent being intended. Donnellan points out, "... we must go to the fact that the speaker has a particular person in mind, to speaker reference, to obtain the particularity. And it is properties of that individual that determine the truth or falsity of what the speaker uttered."[59]

Accordingly, a speaker may succeed in referring to something when what he utters is literally false. A sloppy speaker may even make some inarticulated noises in a particular circumstance and succeed in picking out a particular. It is quite likely when a speaker utters the sentence "I flipped the switch", he intends either to convey the information that he turned on the light or that he illuminated the room. And also, this can very easily explain why Brutus's stabbing is the same as his killing, and so on. Thus, a speaker may not speak correctly what he means, but when he utters several series of meaningful sounds, he has one thing in mind. So, if other people want to know whether

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[58] K. S. Donnellan, "Speaker Reference, Descriptions, and Anaphora" in *Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*, edited by P. A. French, p. 28.
[59] Ibid., p. 41.

just one thing is involved, what they need to do is to bring out the speaker's intention.

But, is this really what Davidson has in mind or in the back of his mind? It does not seem to be so. As I said in section 3, Davidson does not pay enough attention to the contextual use of linguistic expressions in his event talk. He shows the inclination to merely rely on semantic analysis rather than taking into account some other important factors including the relevant problems of pragmatics. If Davidson accepts this speaker reference explanation of his arguments, what he said about event differentiation would lose its attractiveness at the very beginning and there would not be so many philosophical debates between Davidson and many others. Another conclusive reason why speaker reference is irrelevant to Davidson's concerns is that Davidson labored at offering a criterion of "individuation" rather than simply asking about the speaker's intentions.

If either of the above explanations of Davidson's account of events is accepted, then we can make full sense of some of his important arguments. Unfortunately, there is no positive evidence for accepting either of them. Things are not as easy as we sometimes imagine, and we have to direct our attention in other directions. We remind ourselves again: Davidson's problem is *to identify events under different descriptions by filling the blank in "x = y iff _____"*, which is certainly quite meaningful and

deserves a plausible and practicable solution.

VII. Some Speculation on a Possible Criterion

More and more philosophers have become convinced that Davidson's criterion[6] of individuation does not work, and have tried to propose new criteria. When Davidson's theory of events as a whole is seen to be unsuccessful and in what way it is unsuccessful, some ideas about a possible criterion of differentiaton of events seem naturally to emerge. On the one hand, these ideas may help us reflect more deeply what we have discussed so far. On the other hand, they might serve as stimulation for probing further to obtain a working criterion of differentiation. In this section, three factors are considered to be necessary in identifying events under different descriptions: time, space and the applicability of descriptions through their semantic meanings to individual events. Since we understand an event-description as a sentence or a singular term in contextual use, it follows that the same linguistic expression employed in different contexts may refer to different events. Therefore, it will be argued that all of these three factors plus one supplementary condition for some particular cases are sufficient for differentiating individual events.

1. Time

Since we have defined an event as a happening at a time, it is natural that events which occur at different

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[6] My present thesis does not focus on Davidson's criterion of differentiation itself.

times or events with different lapses of time could not be identical, although it is certainly not the case that every philosopher thinks in this way. Let us look at a quotation from Davidson's discussion about Kim's remark that it is not absurd to say that Brutus's killing Caesar is not the same as Brutus's stabbing Caesar.

> The plausibility in this is due, I think, to the undisputed fact that not all stabbings are killings. We are inclined to say: *this* stabbing might not have resulted in a death, so how can it be identical with the killing? Of course the death is not identical with the stabbing; it occurred later. But neither this nor the fact that some stabbings are not killings shows that this particular stabbing was not a killing. Brutus's stabbing of Caesar did result in Caesar's death; so it was in fact, though of course not necessarily, identical with Brutus's killing of Caesar.'[1]

Davidson is almost right. The problem under discussion is whether the description

(18) Brutus stabbed Caesar

and the description

(19) Brutus killed Caesar

are of the same event or not. Davidson's conclusion is not totally correct, though something in his remarks is illuminating. In order to see this clearly, we had better first cast a glance at Davidson's comment on Kim's criterion itself.

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[1] See Davidson, "The Individuation of Events", p. 171.

According to Kim, two sentences are about the same event if they assert truly of the same particulars (i.e. substances) that the same properties (or relations) hold of them.[62] One of Davidson's complaints about Kim's criterion, which seems most relevant to our discussion, is as follows.

> Where I would say the same event may make 'Jones apologized' and 'Jones said "I apologize"' true, Kim is committed to holding that these sentences describe different events. Nor can Kim allow that a stabbing is ever a killing, or the signing of a cheque the paying of a bill.[63]

Intuitively, it is somehow arbitrary to allege, without any qualification, that Brutus's killing of Caesar is a distinct event from Brutus's stabbing of Caesar. The meaning of the expression 'stabbing' is, indeed, not the same as that of 'killing', or in other words, stabbing and killing are not the same properties; but it is quite often the case that stabbing and killing are different facets of the same event, which are taken up by different descriptions. It seems to me that Kim totally misses this point.[64] It is counterintuitive

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[62] See Davidson, "The Individuation of Events", p. 170.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Moreover, Kim's criterion of identity presupposes two distinct identity criteria for the identity of the same particular and the identity of the same property. The validity of these criteria are not undoubtedly fixed. Therefore, a criterion of identity of events which does not presuppose these criteria is preferable. Furthermore, suppose Kim has offered sound criteria of a=b and F=G, he still has to appeal to truth conditions to determine Fa=Fb. In the case of differentiating events, the criteria of a=b and F=G may be redundant; for we may, in this respect, just require the knowledge of truth conditions of

to say that an event can have only one property. Davidson, first of all, is right in claiming that the fact that stabbings might not be killings and the fact that some stabbings are not killings, does not show that a particular stabbing is not a killing. But Davidson's own conclusion is wrong for two reasons.

First, Davidson uses the criterion of same causes and same effects to differentiate individual events. This criterion is *unusable*, for at least we have to decide what the criteria of the *same* causes and effects (According to Davidson, they are events, too!) are. Moreover, by descriptions alone we do not necessarily know whether what they describe have the same causes or effects. This means that we have to know how to know the cause and effect in order to use Davidson's criterion, but the dispute about what should be counted as a cause or an effect is far from being settled.[55]

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[54](cont'd) event-descriptions.

We notice also that Kim uses the expression 'event' in a very broad sense. He says, 'An event or state can be explained as a particular (substance) having a certain property, or more generally a certain number of particulars standing in a certain relation to one another. See Kim's "On the Psycho-physical Identity Theory" in *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 3, (1966) p. 231.

[55] Even though we have had a clear and usable theory about how to know the same causes and effects, Davidson criterion of individuation still seems to suffer counterexamples. For instance, a button is pushed at one time (one cause) to launch two missiles which have different flying routes and speeds (two distinct processes) and finally these two missiles collide to contribute to one explosion (one effect).

Moreover, Some may argue that that many people were sad was an effect of Caesar's death, but not as an effect of Brutus's stabbing Caesar.

Secondly, Davidson totally neglects the time factor in differentiating events. Time itself may not be sufficient for any differentiation, but this does not mean that it is unnecessary. Let us consider the following three possibilities.

(a) Brutus stabbed Caesar, and Caesar was wounded but did not die.

(b) Brutus stabbed Caesar, and Caesar died later.

(c) Brutus stabbed Caesar, and Caesar died when Brutus finished his stabbing.

Certainly, in the first case, the stabbing is not the killing, since Caesar did not die. In the second case, Caesar died from stabbing; but when the event of stabbing was over, the killing‘‘ was not, for Caesar did not die at the point when stabbing was over. We have judged the first case by saying that if Caesar did not die, the event would not have been called a 'killing'. It is reasonable to say in the second case that when the event of the stabbing was over, the event of killing was still going on until Caesar died. It is not possible for an event to be over and still going on at the same time. So, the stabbing is not the killing in the second case. In the third case, we merely employ different sentences to describe one complex process. In this particular case, when Brutus started his stabbing,

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‘‘ We notice that many people would judge the action of the stabbing as a killing by the effect of the stabbing ---- death; therefore, the expression 'killing' may be used to designate the stabbing itself. On the other hand, many people use the expression 'killing' to designate the process ended by the death of the killed.

the process of killing began. At the point of Brutus's finishing stabbing, the process of killing was ended. We have only one process which is a complex. From two different descriptions we obtain *different information about the same event*. Similarly, when we use the description 'the president of the United States', we do not "pick up" a property only, we are referring to a person. If someone argues that we definitely have, in the case above, two events rather than one, namely, Brutus's stabbing and the death of Caesar, it is because he thinks we have only one way of individuating things or events. We mentioned that one event may be a complex which consists of several facets or parts (They may be individual events according to a different criterion of individuation.). A family is an individual, but it may have more than one member. Shall we, then, insist on saying that a family is not an individual because there are more than one individual person involved? I do not mean here that if the time at which an event A occurs is the same as that at which an event B occurs, then A and B are identical. Rather, I mean the converse: one of the reasons why in case (c) above we have only one event is that they have exactly the same lapse of time.

2. Space

When we see one material object at one place and one material object at an other place but we do not see them at the same time, we have the problem of determining whether

just one material entity is involved. Events are not defined as material objects, because they are happenings or processes. Can a particular event occur at different places? Somebody might be very quick to tell a story and conclude that it is possible for an event to occur at different places.'' For example, a person A who lives in London sent a letter-bomb to B in Tokyo. When B opened the letter, he was wounded. So it seems that A's hurting of B occurred at two places, London and Tokyo, though one sub-event of A's posting the letter occurred in London and an other sub-event of B's being wounded occurred in Tokyo. However, a moments' reflection will show that this explanation is not philosophically correct. Properly speaking, London and Tokyo in this case indicate the boundaries of a relatively large spatial zone in which the event of A's hurting of B occurred. This spatial zone is the sum of spatial places once occupied by the physical objects involved when the event was taking place. Hence, the event of A's hurting B occurred neither in London nor in Tokyo; it happened in a single space marked by London and Tokyo. Intuitively, it is inconceivable that an event occurs in two distinct areas (spatial zones) at one time.''

'' To be sure, we are here not talking about event types, as Von Wright does. We are concerned ourselves with particulars.

'' The discussion about the intimate connection between time and space is deliberately avoided here. It might be better to use the expression 'spatio-temporal zone'.

3. The applicability of descriptions

In this section, I wish to emphasize the importance of the applicability of descriptive sentences through their linguistic meanings. The contextual use of a descriptive sentence may refer to a particular and this is done through the linguistic meaning of the sentence. If a sentence is not applicable, through its linguistic meaning, to a particular as an other sentence, they cannot designate the same thing in the world. Let us look at the following two groups of descriptions.

(20) Columbus discovered America.

(21) Columbus discovered America in 1492.

(22) America was discovered.

(23) America was discovered by Columbus in 1492.

(24) Lincoln's moving his fingers in certain ways.

(25) Lincoln's moving his pen in certain ways.

(26) Lincoln's signing his name.

(27) Lincoln's signing the Final Emancipation Proclamation.''

In the first group, the four descriptions contain the same main verb, but they are different descriptions of events. Assume D(20)[description (20)] is employed to refer to event (20) [E(20)], D(21) is used to refer to E(21), and so on. The problem now is whether E(20), E(21), E(22) and E(23) are

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'' The second group of descriptions appears in M. C. Beardsley's "Actions and Events: The Problem of Individuation" in *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 12, p. 263.

one and the same event. We should be aware of the possibility that these descriptions may be of different events; for America might not have been discovered by Columbus. That is, that statement (20) is true does not guarantee the truth of statement (21). But I suggest, if they satisfy the following conditions, they are descriptions of the same event.

(A) E(20), E(21), E(22) and E(23) occur at the same place and the same time.

(B) Each of D(20) -- D(23) can be truly applied to each of E(20) -- E(23).[7°]

To be precise, besides the knowledge of the place and time of what is described, we need to know whether each of E(20) -- E(23) makes each description true in order to know whether they are one and the same event. I am not here repeating the philosophical cliche that if each property of A is also a property of B and *vice versa*, then A and B are identical. Sometimes we do not know whether we can exhaust the properties of A and B, and we need not bother ourselves about all properties possessed by A and B in order to know whether A and B are one and the same event. Here we consider only a small list of properties. The above example is not intended to establish a general criticism but just to show what is necessary for differentiating events under different descriptions.

[7°] The knowledge of the applicability of descriptive sentences is not sufficient for differentiation. More will be said below.

If it were the case that America was discovered by two people simultaneously, and we only know the fact that America was discovered by Columbus and another English-speaking tribe only knows the fact that America was discovered by a person named Robinson, then even though the people of the tribe employ sentence (22) and we use (23), they describe a different event from ours. What is described by the English-speaking tribe does not make our description true. In other words, it is not the case that whenever sentence (22) truly applies to something, so does sentence (23).

We notice that the first group of descriptions contains the same main verb. And also, D(21) semantically entails D(20), and D(23) entails D(22). These peculiar features may play an important part in the case. Let us turn to the second group of descriptions which neither contain the same main verb nor is one short for others. When a person moves his fingers in certain ways, it may be the case that the person is signaling to someone else. So D(24) may be a description of an event other than what D(25), D(26) and D(27) describe. However, if D(24), D(25), D(26) and D(27) satisfy the following conditions, they are of one and the same event.

(V) What D(24), D(25), D(26) and D(27) describe occur at the same place and the same time.

(W) Each of D(24) -- D(27) can be truly applied to

each of E(24) -- E(27).

This looks very neat and tidy. But a problem still remains to be solved. Descriptions may take up the features shared by all events or by more than one event. For instance, the descriptive sentence 'The dog is running' may be equally truly applied to an innumerable number of events. When speaker A utters "The earth is moving" and B utters "The earth is moving", they may mean different sorts of movement of the earth. One is the earth's movement around its own axis and the other is its movement round the sun. At a particular time, these two different movements occur at the same place and the same time, and the sentence "The earth is moving" is equally applicable to both of them. The sentence is also applicable to the event which is the complex combination of the earth's two sorts of movement. The contextual use of the sentence would make the reference clear. Whenever we come across such descriptions, we need something else in order to tell whether what they describe is the same event. One possible candidate of what we need is: **What one description refers to is not a complex relative to[''] what an other description refers to and** *vice versa*.

To simplify the formulation of our proposed criterion of identifying the same event under different descriptions, we have:

[''] By the expression 'complex relative to' I do not refer only to the complexity of a whole with respect to temporal-spatial parts. I use the expression in a more general sense, which is illustrated by the examples seen in the last page.

> **Suppose an individual event E' is referred to by description D' and an individual event E" is referred to by description D". E' and E" are one and the same event entity *iff***
> **(i) E' and E" occur at the same place and the same time;**
> **(ii) D' is truly applicable to E' and E", and D" is truly applicable to E" and E';**
> **(iii) E' is not a complex relative to E" and *vice versa*.**

In this formulation of the criterion of differentiation of events under different descriptions, E' and E" are known as individuals referred to by the descriptions D' and D" respectively. That E' is identical with E" is intended to be a conclusion rather than a presupposition assumed, consciously or unconsciously, as a hidden premise. Thus, by statement (i) we inquire into the problem of whether two distinct spatial-temporal zones are involved. By statement (ii), we intend to know the applicability of the descriptions in each particular case by considering the linguistic meanings of descriptions. If it is impossible to know whether D' and D" are true or not in a particular case, then identifying the referents of D' and D" is simply out of question. The reason why we need statement (iii) is that a complex event may consist of sub-events or facets which occupy the same time and space and which are each describable by employing the same descriptive sentence.

VIII. Concluding Remarks

The concept of identity is so important to many branches of philosophical studies such as metaphysics, logic and philosophy of language that an attempt to have a clear understanding of it and the problems closely related to it is certainly desirable. In making this sort of attempt, if we have more than one answer to a specific question, we want to know which is correct in the first place. If the answers we have are equally plausible, we should still continue our pursuit in order to know which answer is better formulated, usable and economical. In contemporary Western philosophy, Donald Davidson's theory of event is generally insightful and influential. But, unfortunately, it does not seem to be well formulated and usable, and some aspects of it do not even seem to be strictly correct.

In his *Tractatus* 5.5303, Wittgenstein writes, "Roughly speaking, to say of *two* things that they are identical is nonsense, and to say of *one* thing that is identical with itself is to say nothing at all." However, we cannot ignore the fact that we do have the concept of identity which is very informative in our understanding of the world. And, it is likely that we have more than one identity problem, even though we limit our consideration to event talk. From what we said above, we see that we may well isolate the problem of differentiation of events from the problem of individuation of events and hence talk about the identity problem in a significant way. I emphasized the point that a

solution to the problem of differentiation presupposes a solution to the problem of individuation, but it is not always the case in the reverse direction. There are many cases of which we need to answer the question, "Is this an individual?"; i.e. only the ability of discriminating one individual from others in its immediate circumstance is required. A tells B, "A boy was killed in an accident yesterday", B knows that *a* tragic event occurred. Now C tells B, "A pupil was run over by a car yesterday", and B also concludes that what C tells him is *an* unpleasant occurrence. B does not seem to have any trouble to tell which is an individual event. But, if B wants to draw the conclusion that what A describes is the same event as what B describes, he definitely needs to do further investigation. If you are shown a dime, you can easily tell that it is one, not two. A minute later, the same dime is shown to you, you still fairly easily tell that it is one, not two. But how many coins appear in these showings? That is, how many distinct entities do you encounter? This is what we call the problem of differentiation.

With some reflecton, we realize that Donald Davidson's formulation of the identity problem as the filling of the blank in "$x = y$ iff _____" is better understood as the problem of differentiation. But Davidson's theory has to be modified and revised in some important respects. Languages play an important part in differentiation of events. Davidson's move to reformulate identity questions as

questions about identity sentences enables us to approach our identity problem at a new angle. To push slightly harder along the line than Davidson does, we seem to have some suggestions to offer with the intention of having a plausible and practicable account of the problem.

As soon as we become clear about the pragmatic implications of the expressions 'fact' and 'event', we see that it is reasonble to say that the contextual use of a descriptive sentence may refer to an event. If we want to know whether different descriptive sentences are descriptions of the same event, we are actually considering one specific aspect of the problem of how a language is connected with the world. Events in the world are concrete and complex individuals and one sentence may be connected with different individuals even though the linguistic meaning of it remains the same. As a result, we not only need to know why we need the categories of fact and event and the relation between them, we also have to know in what circumstances descriptive sentences are used in order to have a solution to a particular problem of differentiating.

Human actions are a sub-class of events, so the differentiation of actions is not the very same problem as the differentiation of events. An action may get involved in an event as a facet or a part. Since we want to have a full analysis of the content of event-descriptions and have a theory of event in general, we cannot afford to neglect the fact that an event may be a complex and different features

may be taken up by different descriptions. As we know, we may employ two descriptions to pick out one person, so we may well pick out one event by different descriptions.

When we attempt to save Davidson's arguments by considering the problem of speaker reference, we find that we would ultimately alter Davidson's project in so doing. Davidson is not concerned with the intention of speakers who offer event-descriptions. And, since we desire a more profound understanding of how expressions are associated with the world through linguistic meaning, speaker reference does not seem very interesting and illuminating in the issue with which we are concerned ourselves.

To propose a new criterion seems to be a good way to justify our formulation and consideration of the problem. The factors of time and space are considered necessary but insufficient. And, the truth and falsity of descriptions is taken to be an illuminating indication of how the descriptions and their referents are related in a particular case of differentiating. In addition, the knowledge of the relative complexity of the individual referents concerned as a condition is thought to be appropriate, since one property may be exmplified by more than one event at the same place and time, and this property would be very often designated by one sentence.

The reasons why sameness of time and space are necessary for differentiating events are already given above. Why is the knowledge of the applicability of

descriptions also necessary? And why, together with the other two conditions, may it be sufficient for differentiating events under different descriptions? First of all, the conditions of the same place and the same time cannot differentiate all events. For example, the earth's rotating around its own axis and the earth's travelling around the sun are different events, but they occur at the same place and the same time. Next, if a description is not true of what it describes, it does not make sense to ask whether it describes the same event as other descriptions do. So it is natural and essential for us to know whether descriptions can be truly applied to each individual. Furthermore, if we only know that a description is true of what it describes and that it is true of what other descriptions describe, we may still not know whether just one entity is involved; for there are cases that two different events having parts overlapping to each other. For instance, if a person A shot two people to death by one bullet, and these two people died at different times, then the descriptive sentence "A shot someone to death" is truly applicable to A's two different killings. After all, if (i) D' is truly applicable to both E' and E" and D" is truly applicable to both E" and E' which occur at the same place and the same time, and (ii) E' is not a complex relative to E" and *vice versa*, then there are two possibilities: one is that what D' and D" actually describe is the same facet or the same feature of an event; the other is that D' and D"

describe different facets or features of E' and E". If it is the second case, the only way for each of D' and D" to be true of each of E' and E" is that E' and E" are one and the same individual entity.

To conclude, we appreciate the merits of Davidson's general theory of events and we also find that we need to modify it in some important aspects in order to have a plausible account of the issue. We would be better off by allowing a sub-class of facts to consist of events which we define as happenings at time. We should clearly distinguish the problem of individuation from the problem of differentiation even though we may have one single solution to both of them. A general account of the problem of differentiation does not necessarily presuppose a specific criterion of individuation. We also realize that we cannot determine whether different linguistic expressions are of one and the same event simply by looking at the semantic features of the expressions. The contextual use of a sentence may play a referential role and this is prerequisite to the differentiation of events under different descriptions. Davidson's causal criterion is not believed to work by many philosophers including Davidson himself, but Davidson's move to substitute for questions about identities questions about sentences about identities deserves attention and further investigation. I have reformulated Davidson's theory of events and speculated on a

possible criterion of differentiation of events with the intention of supporting my reformulation.

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